



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

900 EAST MAIN STREET
RICHMOND, VA 23219

*Air Force Association
American Ex-Prisoners
of War
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fleet Reserve Association
Korean War Veterans
Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Officers Association
of America
Military Order of the
World Wars
National Association for
Uniformed Services
Navy Seabee Veterans of
America
Non-Commissioned
Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Officers Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines Association*

Adopted
July 17, 2013

Updated
January 5, 2014

Position Paper 2014-06 Measure if Virginia Veterans are being properly served

1. **Objective:** Provide funding in the 2014-2016 biennial budget to commission an update to the 2010 Virginia Tech report “*Assessing the Experiences, Supportive Service Needs and Service Gaps of Veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia*” to measure progress in access to health care, behavioral healthcare and supportive community services, including employment, housing and financial assistance, for veterans, members of the National Guard and Reserves not in active federal service and their families in the Commonwealth.
2. **Background:**
 - a. The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) was established in law by the 2008 Virginia General Assembly to ensure that services to veterans and their families are readily available in all areas of the Commonwealth.
 - b. The program monitors and coordinates behavioral health, rehabilitative, and support services for veterans and their families and addresses health and wellness issues such as housing, financial assistance, employment, healthcare and community services.
 - c. Virginia is home to approximately 837,000 veterans and is expected to grow to 850,000 in 2017. Included in this population are over 300,000 who served since September 11, 2001. The Virginia National Guard and Reserve components have been called upon as never before to deploy to combat zones.
 - d. The challenges of the current conflicts are enormous. Data indicate that 38% of Soldiers and 31% of Marines report psychological symptoms. Among members of the National Guard, the figure rises to 49%. Psychological symptoms are significantly higher among those with repeated deployments.
 - e. To determine the target populations and its needs VWWP contracted for a study with the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG) in 2009. The VTIPG study assessed the current service experiences (consumer satisfaction), emerging and unserved needs and service gaps within the range of veteran’s services available in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Particular consideration was given to the behavioral health and traumatic brain injury service needs of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. This study served as the foundation for confirming the infrastructure of the VWWP, and has been instrumental in accessing funds through grant approval.
3. **Discussion:** Continued evolution and support of the VWWP would be enhanced by measuring the needs of the current veterans population and those of their families and the measurement of progress achieved in addressing those needs. The updated Needs Assessment will provide critical demographic data for continual quality and process improvement of the VWWP and its partner agencies and organizations.
4. **Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly ensure the needs of Virginia veterans are being met by approving a budget amendment for an additional \$190,000 (GF) in FY15 to update the 2010 Virginia Tech report “*Assessing the Experiences, Supportive Service Needs and Service Gaps of Veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia*”.